

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

**Summary on
Second Chapter
by
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- Note: 1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

In the first chapter, *Arjuna* was shown to be completely immersed in grief (*śoka*) caused by attachment (*rāga*) and delusion (*moha*). Independently analysing the problem, he comes to the conclusion that withdrawing from the war is the only solution.

In the beginning of the second chapter we see the turning point in *Arjuna*. Chastised by *Kṛṣṇa* (2, 3), *Arjuna* analyses the situation further. This leads to two important discoveries. 1. His weakness of attachment is a fundamental problem which cannot be solved by superficial methods (9). 2. He has to surrender completely to a *guru* to get out of this fundamental problem (8).

Thus, *Arjuna* becomes a *śiṣya* by surrendering to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Naturally, *Kṛṣṇa* also becomes a *guru*. Now that the *guru-śiṣya* relationship has been struck, the teaching can begin (10).

[Once a human being discovers the seeker in him, the *guru* will be right in front. The vedantic teaching can take place only between a *guru* and *śiṣya*.]

Kṛṣṇa straightaway attacks *Arjuna*'s idea that the war is going to harm *Bhīṣma* or himself. He points out that all the problems of *Arjuna* are because of delusion caused by ignorance, for wise men never have such a problem (11). Thereafter, *Kṛṣṇa* gives different reasons to establish that *Arjuna* has to fight this war:

- I From the stand point of the true nature of the *Ātmā* (*ādhyātmika-dṛṣṭi*), *Bhīṣma* and others are immortal. *Ātmā* is never subject to changes inspite of the changes of the body. It is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. Hence, neither is *Arjuna* a slayer nor is *Bhīṣma* slain. So, why should he resist to fight? (12 to 25). Even if the *Ātmā* is impermanent, *Arjuna* should not

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lament. Whatever appears will have to disappear and whatever disappears will appear. Hence, one should learn to accept the change. [In fact, change is the beauty of creation. It looks ugly when our outlook is partial or selfish.] Hence, why should *Arjuna* grieve for the physical separation from *Bhīṣma* and others which is inevitable in life? (26 to 30).

- II From the stand point of *Kṣatriya*'s duty (*dhārmika-dṛṣṭi*), *Arjuna* can fight if it is necessary to establish order. A *kṣatriya* must look at a situation not from personal stand point, but from social stand point (31). Hence, why should *Arjuna* hesitate to fight for a righteous cause? A righteous war is a door to heaven for a *kṣatriya* (32). If *Arjuna* avoids war, not only will he be shirking his duty and losing heaven, but he will positively incur sin (33). For avoiding sin, atleast, *Arjuna* should fight.
- III Looking at the situation from worldly angle (*laukika-dṛṣṭi*), *Arjuna* should not withdraw from the war. He will be called a coward by everyone (including the future generation) (34, 36). Shouldn't *Arjuna* fight to protect his reputation?

With these arguments, Lord persuades *Arjuna* to fight (37, 38) and concludes the first part of his teaching. He calls this *sāṅkhya-yoga* (39). [In fact, the first argument which deals with the nature of the *Ātmā* and the body (*ātma-anātmā-viveka*) alone is the *sāṅkhya-yoga*.]

Hereafter, the Lord enters into *buddhī-yoga* (*karma-yoga*). [Though *sāṅkhya-yoga* is the true solution for sorrow, many are not fit to gain it because of the false idea (*moha*) that the worldly pursuits can solve the problem. So, initially, one has to be allowed to pursue worldly ends. By this, one should discover for oneself that actions and their results cannot give permanent satisfaction. This is dispassion. A dispassionate mind can pursue *sāṅkhya-yoga*. Thus *karma-yoga* is introduced as a means to come to *sāṅkhya-yoga*.]

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First, the Lord describes the glory of *karma-yoga* (40 to 46). Then comes the principle of *karma-yoga*. One can choose one's action but never the result. The result is dependent on the laws of action. The other factors of the world, known and unknown, may bring a totally unexpected result. One cannot avoid that. Yet inaction will not be a solution (47). No one can completely know the laws of action. Hence, actions are often imperfect inspite of effort. So, one should ever be ready for any result. One can hope for the best, but should be prepared for the worst. When one acts with the above understanding, success and failure lose their capacity to shake him. One does not react, because he is not caught unawares. This equanimity in action is *yoga* (48). Thus, one can convert the binding *karma* into a valid teacher. This is skill in action (50). A tranquil mind will soon shed its false value attributed to the world and turn towards the *Ātmā* (52). When, through Self-knowledge, one gets established in the peaceful *Ātmā*, he attains liberation (53).

Now, *Arjuna* becomes curious to know the characteristics of a person who is firmly established in Self-knowledge (*sthita-prajña*) (54). *Kṛṣṇa* answers *Arjuna's* question and gives the means of stabilising the knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be fruitful unless it is stabilised and assimilated. For this, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about two important *sādhana*s (58 to 68). They are the control of the mind and the sense organs and contemplation upon the teaching. By this, the knowledge sets (61). On the other hand, if these are not practised, the mind and the sense organs will drag a person to the field of sense-objects and gradually pull him down spiritually (62, 63).

Talking about the characteristics of a wise man, the Lord points out that the man of Self-knowledge is always satisfied with himself and, consequently, he is free from all desires (55). He is independent of the world to be happy. Naturally, he is free from attachment, hatred, desire, anger, fear, elation, depression etc. (56, 57). Though living in the same world, he enjoys a freedom and contentment which

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is unknown to others. Thus, if the ignorant man can be said to be in darkness with regards to the *Ātmā*, the wise man is in broad daylight of the *Ātmā* (69). The best comparison for the wise man's mind is the ocean. The ocean is independently full and is unaffected by the rivers, entering or not entering, dirty or clean. Similarly, the wise man's mind is independently full. It is undisturbed by the favourable and unfavourable experiences, entering or not entering (70). *Kṛṣṇa* concludes this topic by glorifying this state as *Brāhmī*-state, reaching which one does not get deluded again. He lives the life as *jīvan-mukta* (liberated while living) even at the fag end of this journey. After death, he becomes one with *Brahman* (*nirvāṇam*) which is called *vidheha-mukti*.

Thus the second chapter discusses the following four topics mainly:

1. *Arjunaśaraṇāgati*.....1 to 10
2. *Sāṅkhya-yoga*.....11 to 38
3. *Karma-yoga*.....39 to 53
4. *Sthitaprajñatva-upāya* and *sthitaprajña-lakṣaṇa*.....54 to 72

Since *sāṅkhya-yoga* is the main topic, this chapter is aptly called *Sāṅkhya-yoga*.
